REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 1-4 and 19-21 are allowed.

Claims 1-5, 14-17, and 22-28 stand rejected. Claims 5, 8, 16, and 23 through 27 are amended. The amendments are believed to introduce no new matter. Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of claims 1-5, 14-17, and 22-28 are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under Obviousness-Type Double Patenting

Claims 5-10, 14-17, and 22-28 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-27 of U.S. Patent No. 6,313,771 to Munroe, *et al.* ("Munroe"). In view of the amendment to claims 5, 8, 16, and 23 through 27 above, Applicants respectfully traverse. Claim 5 recites in pertinent part, "a second station that is coupled to receive a decoded output signal of the first station." Claim 8 recites in pertinent part "a second destination coupled to receive the stripped signal from the first destination". Claims 1-27 of Munroe do not teach or suggest such a "second station" or "second destination". Therefore, independent claims 5 and 8 and dependent claims 6-7, 9-10, 14-15, and 22 of the present application are patentable over the claims of Munroe.

Independent claim 16 recites, "broadcasting the optical signal to a user station via first and second stations". Claims 1-27 of Munroe do not teach or suggest such a feature. Therefore, claim 16 and dependent claim 17 are patentable.

Claim 23 recites, "a second station coupled to provide an output signal to the first station". Claims 1-27 of Munroe do not teach or suggest such a second station. Thus, independent claim 23 and dependent claims 24-25 are patentable.

Claim 26 recites, "an encoder to encode an optical signal to designate the multiplexing station's level...". Claims 1-27 of Munroe do not teach or suggest such a feature. Thus independent claim 26 and dependent claims 27-28 are patentable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 5-10, 14-17, and 22-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,314,220 to Mossberg, *et al.* ("Mossberg"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Amended claim 5 recites in pertinent part "a second station that is coupled to receive a decoded output signal of the first station." Applicants submit that Mossberg fails to teach or suggest such a second station. More specifically, neither elements 15j nor 16j (cited in the office action as first and second user stations) have an output signal that is received by the other user station in Fig. 1 of Mossberg. Thus, the cited reference does not teach or suggest a second user station that is coupled to receive an output signal from the first user station. Accordingly, independent claim 5 and dependent claims 6-7, and 22 are patentable over Mossberg.

Amended claim 8 recites in pertinent part "a second destination coupled to receive the stripped signal from the first destination". Applicants submit that Mossberg fails to teach or suggest such a second destination. More specifically, neither elements 15j nor 16j (cited in the office action as first and second user stations) have an output signal that is received by the other user station in Fig. 1 of Mossberg. Accordingly, independent claim 8 and dependent claims 9-10 and 14-15 are patentable over Mossberg.

Amended claim 16 recites in pertinent part "broadcasting the optical signal to a user station via the first station and the second station", where the second stations is "of a plurality of second stations." Mossberg does not teach or suggest such a second station. Therefore, independent claim 16 and dependent claim 17 are patentable over Mossberg.

Amended claim 23 recites in pertinent part, "a second station coupled to provide an output signal to the first station". The office action does not address how Mossberg teaches or suggests such a second station. Therefore, independent claim 23 and dependent claims 24-25 are patentable over Mossberg.

Amended claim 26 recites in pertinent part, "an encoder to encode an optical signal to designate the multiplexing station's level." The office action does not address how Mossberg teaches or suggests such an encoder. Therefore, independent claim 26 and dependent claims 27-28 are patentable over Mossberg.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing claim amendment and remarks, Applicants believe claims 1-10, 14-17 and 19-28 are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned representative if the Examiner believes that an interview might be useful for any reason.

Respectfully submitted,

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Paige A. Johnson
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August 22, 2002
Date

VERSION OF CLAIMS WITH MARKINGS

(Twice Amended) A central station for an optical network, comprising:

a transmitter coupled to produce an optical data signal from an electrical data signal; and

an encoder coupled to apply a composite code to the optical data signal, the composite code having a first[-level] code and a second[-level] code, wherein the first[-level] code is to identify a first [user] station and the second[-level] code is to identify a second [user] station that is coupled to receive a decoded output signal from the first station.

8. (Three-times Amended) A multiplexing station for an optical network, comprising:

a temporal address decoder coupled to receive a signal containing data coded according to a first downstream address code and a second downstream address code and to strip the first [and second] downstream address code[s] from the signal, wherein the first downstream address code is to designate a first destination [for a first portion of the data] and the second downstream address code is to designate a second destination [for a second portion of the data] that is coupled to receive the stripped signal from the first destination.

16. (Three-times Amended) A method, comprising:

selecting a first temporal code and a second temporal code for an optical signal to identify a first [user] station and a second [user] station of a plurality of second stations, respectively;

applying the first and second temporal codes to the optical signal with at least one fiber Bragg grating; and

broadcasting the optical signal to a user station via the first station and the second [user] station[s; and

recovering data from the first and second temporal codes by the first and second user stations, respectively].

23. (Amended) A central station for an optical network, comprising:

a decoder [coupled] to [apply]decode a composite code [to]from an optical data signal received from a first station, the composite code having a first-level code and a second-level code, wherein the first-level code is to identify [a]the first [user] station and the second-level code is to identify a second [user] station coupled to provide an output signal to the first station; and

an optical receiver coupled to produce an electrical signal from the decoded optical data signal.

24. (Amended) The central station of claim 23, wherein the composite code [to be applied by the encoder] is a temporal code.

25. (Amended) The central station of claim [24]23, wherein [the composite code is an address code designate an intended destination for data defined by] the electrical data signal containing data from a user station of a plurality of user stations to be provided to an external data link.

26. (Amended) A multiplexing station for [an]multilevel optical network[,] comprising:

[a temporal address]an encoder [coupled] to encode an optical signal [according to a first downstream address and a second downstream address, wherein the first downstream address is] to designate [a destination for a first portion of data carried by the optical signal and the second downstream address is to designate a destination for a second portion of data carried by the optical signal]the multiplexing station's level, the optical signal containing data from a user station of a plurality of user stations.

27. (Amended) The multiplexing station of claim 26, wherein the [temporal address] encoder includes at least one fiber Bragg grating to encode an optical signal.